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Sen. Allen's 'NextEnergy' bills headed to governor

LANSING – Legislation to encourage the research, development and use of alternative energies passed the Michigan Senate last week, said state Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City.

Senate Bill 583, sponsored by Allen, expands the types of technologies within the scope of the NextEnergy Authority Act.

“The NextEnergy legislation really isn’t ‘next energy’ anymore,” Allen said. “A great deal of advancements have been made since then and it is imperative to keep this sort of legislation current and up-to-date. A company in my district, Tellurex Corporation of Traverse City, has developed an absolutely amazing piece of technology using alternative energy that isn’t covered in the NextEnergy Act.”

The Michigan Legislature established the act in 2002 to promote alternative energy technology and economic growth throughout the state. Some of the key changes made by Allen’s legislation are:

- Addition of biomass and thermoelectric technologies as alternative energy systems;
- Addition of hydroelectric technologies as an alternative energy technology;
- Clarification on the qualifications for hybrid vehicles; and
- Removing the cap on generation capacity for fuel cells, photovoltaic and wind energy systems.

SB 584, part of the NextEnergy package, is designed to promote and increase the research, development and manufacturing of alternative energy technology, as well as promote and increase the testing of the technology.

“Michigan continues to be one of the centers of invention for the world,” Allen said. “Numerous technologies are developed by industries located here and at our universities. This legislation will create the incentives we need to actually develop and build these technologies in our state.”

SB 803, introduced by Allen, was also approved by the Legislature. The proposal would classify “wind energy systems” as personal property clearing up any current confusion in tax law regarding wind turbines.

Under the legislation a “wind energy system” means an integrated unit consisting of a wind turbine composed of a rotor and an electric generator, control system, inverter or other power conditioning unit, and a tower – which uses moving air to produce power.

The property is also more clearly qualified for an exemption under the NextEnergy program.

SBs 583, 584 and 803 will now go to the governor’s desk.

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